

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 288490

21

ORIGIN NEA-10

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PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

SSM-05 SAM-01 OMB-01 /111 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:MBERRY:RGH/DP

APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN

S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)

H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)

SSM - MR. MC ANDREW

NEA - MS. GRIFFIN

NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER

NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH

IO/UNP - MR. HELLMAN

----- 120976

O 242309Z NOV 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION SINAI

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

USMISSION GENEVA

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 288490

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NY
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
CINCEUR

UNCLAS STATE 288490

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - NOVEMBER 24

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR NOVEMBER 24,
1976:

Q. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE TRANSITION OFFICE?

A. THE TRANSITION TEAM ARRIVED YESTERDAY, AROUND NOONTIME.
SIX MEMBERS, THREE CONSULTANTS. THEY ARE LOCATED IN THE
SUITE OF ROOMS ON THE FIRST FLOOR. 1004 IS THE SUITE
NUMBER.

Q. WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

A. THEY HAVE JUST BEGUN TO SWING INTO MOTION. I DO NOT
THINK THAT THERE IS A PATTERN OF ACTIVITY SET UP AS YET,
BUT THEIR PURPOSE IS TO BE IN CONTACT WITH DEPARTMENT
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PAGE 03 STATE 288490

OFFICERS ON SUBSTANTIVE AS WELL AS MANAGERIAL MATTERS--AND
I PRESUME THAT IS WHAT THEY ARE DOING.

Q. HAVE THEY ALL BEEN SUBJECTED TO THE SECURITY SCREENING?

A. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE SECURITY CLEARANCE PROCESS IS
STILL GOING ON FOR SEVERAL OF THE MEMBERS. MR. LAKE,
OF COURSE, HAD HIS SECURITY CLEARANCE -- BUT FOR OTHER
MEMBERS IT IS STILL IN PROCESS, I UNDERSTAND.

Q. WHAT KIND OF WRIT DO THEY HAVE FROM THE DEPARTMENT?
WHAT DO THEY HAVE ACCESS TO?

A. AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THEY WILL MAKE THEIR REQUESTS KNOWN THROUGH THE MECHANISM SET UP IN S/S, AND THE MATERIAL WILL BE CHANNELLED TO THEM THROUGH S/S.

THE SECRETARY HAS SAID THAT THERE IS GOING TO BE FULL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE TO THE TRANSITION TEAM.

Q. ON ANOTHER SUBJECT?

A. YES.

Q. REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM HUGHES, WHO IS JUST BACK FROM THE MIDDLE EAST, WHERE HE HAD TALKS WITH PRESIDENT SADAT AMONG OTHERS, REPORTS THAT SADAT IS NO LONGER ASKING THAT THE PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZATION TAKE PART IN THE GENEVA TALKS--AND THAT EGYPT, JORDAN AND SYRIA ARE (QUOTING HUGHES) "READY TO RECONVENE TALKS IN GENEVA WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS."

DOES THAT REFLECT THE EGYPTIAN POSITION AS SEEN, OR AS KNOWN TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT?

A. I HAVE NOTHING ON THE PARTICULAR REPORT THAT YOU REFER TO.

Q. WELL, INDEPENDENT OF THE REPORT, DO WE UNDERSTAND THE EGYPTIAN POSITION NOW TO ACCEPT THE IDEA OF GENEVA TALKS WITHOUT PARTICIPATION OF THE PLO?
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 288490

A. I HAVE NO INFORMATION ON THAT ASPECT OF IT. I WOULD HAVE TO CHECK INTO IT.

Q. WOULD YOU, PLEASE, SIR?

A. YES.

Q. THERE WERE REPORTS THIS MORNING OF SYRIAN FORCES--THE TOKEN FORCE THEY DESCRIBED IT AS--MOVING INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON--COMING DOWN FROM --

A. YES.

Q. NUMBER ONE: DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THOSE REPORTS?

AND SECONDLY, DO YOU HAVE ANY REACTION TO THEM?

A. WELL OBVIOUSLY, WE HAVE SEEN THE REPORTS OF IT. I REALLY HAVE NOTHING TO ADD TO WHAT WAS SAID YESTERDAY ON THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. WE CONTINUE TO WATCH THE SITUATION CLOSELY AND WE CONTINUE TO URGE RESTRAINT IN THIS CRITICAL AREA.

Q. ARE YOU -- DOES "RESTRAINT" MEAN THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE GOING INTO WHERE THEY ARE GOING?

A. NO, I THINK IT'S PRETTY CLEAR THAT WE ARE URGING ALL PARTIES TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT.

Q. NO. BUT DOES THAT INCLUDE THAT MOVING OF ANY SYRIAN TROOPS FROM SIDON TO THE SOUTH?

A. I DO NOT THINK I AM IN A POSITION TO DEFINE WHAT WE MEAN BY "RESTRAINT." I THINK THAT IS PRETTY CLEAR.

Q. NOT TO ME, IT ISN'T.

Q. IT MEANS YOU HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THAT, IN OTHER WORDS?

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 288490

A. I REALLY CANNOT SAY MORE THAN THAT WE ARE URGING THE PARTIES IN THE AREA TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT.

Q. IS WHAT THE SYRIAN ARMY IS DOING NOW "RESTRAINT" IN YOUR VIEW?

A. I REALLY CANNOT GO BEYOND WHAT I HAAVE SAID ON THAT.

Q. HAVE YOU ASKED SYRIA TO EXPLAIN ITS INTENTIONS, OR ELABORATE ON, OR CLARIFY THE SITUATION REGARDING THIS TROOP MOVEMENT?

A. I THINK WE MADE IT CLEAR YESTERDAY THAT WE ARE NOT REALLY GOING TO GET INTO OUTLINING WHAT WE HAVE SAID, OR ARE SAYING, TO THE VARIOUS DIPLOMATIC PARTIES INVOLVED. I REALLY CANNOT ADDRESS THAT.

Q. WOULD YOU PLEASE BE MORE SPECIFIC AS TO WHAT PARTIES YOU ARE REFERRING TO WHEN YOU CALL FOR RESTRAINT?

A. YES.

Q. NUMBER ONE: DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THOSE REPORTS? AND SECONDLY, DO YOU HAVE ANY REACTION TO THEM?

A. WELL OBVIOUSLY, WE HAVE SEEN THE REPORTS OF IT. I REALLY HAVE NOTHING TO ADD TO WHAT WAS SAID YESTERDAY ON THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. WE CONTINUE TO WATCH THE SITUATION CLOSELY AND WE CONTINUE TO URGE RESTRAINT IN THIS CRITICAL AREA.

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PAGE 06 STATE 288490

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Q. WOULD YOU PLEASE BE MORE SPECIFIC AS TO WHAT PARTIES YOU ARE REFERRING TO WHEN YOU CALL FOR RESTRAINT?

A. ALL THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED.

Q. DO YOU AT LEAST KNOW IF THE DESCRIPTION OF THE FORCE AS A "TOKEN FORCE" IS ACCURATE? DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT CONSIDER WHAT IS GOING ON -- THE MOVEMENT -- A "TOKEN MOVEMENT? "

A. I AM NOT INFORMED OF ANY OPINION THAT WE MAY HAVE ON THIS REPORT IN REGARD TO MOVEMENT.

Q. ACTUALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO GO BACK AND SEE IF THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS ANY INDEPENDENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE MOVEMENT UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 07 STATE 288490

BECAUSE YOU REFERRED TO THAT "YOU HAVE SEEN THE REPORTS WE HAVE SEEN."

A. YES.

Q. YES, O.K., BUT I MEAN -- DO YOU HAVE ANY INDEPENDENT INFORMATION THAT YOU COULD SHARE WITH US ABOUT THE MOVEMENT?

A. I REALLY DO NOT. I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO GO BEYOND WHAT WE SAID YESTERDAY ON THIS GENERAL SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

Q. OF COURSE I AM TALKING ABOUT A TROOP MOVEMENT. I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT DIPLOMATIC NOTES AND SUCH.

A. WELL IT HAS TO DO WITH THE GENERAL SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, AND I AM SIMPLY NOT IN A POSITION TO EXPAND ON WHAT I HAVE SAID IN THAT REGARD.

A. YES, BUT YOU ARE LEAVING ME WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT ACTUALLY YOU DON'T KNOW, ONE WAY OR ANOTEHER WHETHER THERE ARE ANY TROOP MOVEMENTS IN FROM SIDON, AND IF THERE ARE, WHETHER IT IS A TOKEN FORCE, A MAJOR FORCE, OR REALLY, ANYTHING AT ALL ABOUT IT. NOW ASSUMING THAT YOU DON'T KNOW, COULD YOU FIND OUT?

Q. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE SITUATION HAS CHANGED FROM YESTERDAY SO YOUR STATEMENTS THEN DON'T NECESSARILY APPLY TODAY.

A. I THINK IT IS OBVIOUS THAT WE ARE WATCHING THE SITUATION VERY CAREFULLY. AND WE HAVE SEEN THE REPORTS THAT YOU HAVE SEEN. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT IT, WHICH IS WHY

WE ARE IN CONTACT WITH THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED AND URGING RESTRAIN. BUT I WOULD NOT READ ANY MORE INTO IT THAN THAT.

Q. ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE MOVEMENT? IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT?
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 08 STATE 288490

A. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE GENERAL SITUATION THERE.

Q. ARE YOU CONFIRMING THAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE MOVEMENT, THEN, OF THE --

A. NO. WHAT I AM SAYING IS: WE ARE AWARE OF THE SAME REPORTS THAT YOU ARE WITH REGARD TO THE SITUATION IN

SOUTHERN LEBANON; AND THAT WE ARE FOLLOWING IT VERY CLOSELY. AND REALLY I CANNOT SAY ANY MORE THAN THAT ON THE SUBJECT.

Q. CAN I ASK IT THIS WAY, FRED?

A. YES.

Q. HAVE YOU BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE GOVERNMENTS INVOLVED-- HAVE YOU BEEN IN TOUCH WITH SYRIA? HAVE YOU ASKED SYRIA ABOUT TROOP MOVEMENTS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON? AND HAVE YOU ASKED SYRIA ABOUT ITS INTENTIONS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON?

A. I REALLY CANNOT GO BEYOND SAYING THAT WE ARE IN CONTACT WITH ALL THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED.

Q. ARE YOU IN CONTACT WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE, IN MEXICO, ABOUT THE SITUATION IN LEBANON?

A. I FEEL SURE THAT THE SECRETARY IS WELL INFORMED ON WHAT IS GOING ON.

Q. WELL THAT IS AN EMOTIONAL STATEMENT ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON. I MEAN, BESIDES YOUR FEELINGS, DO YOU KNOW WHETHER HE IS?

A. I AM CERTAIN THAT THE SECRETARY OF STATE IS WELL-INFORMED AND WELL-BRIEFED ON THE SITUATION IN LEBANON.

Q. AND THAT HE CAN CERTAINLY ACT FROM ACAPULCO, IF THERE IS ANY NEED FOR ACTION?

A. HE HAS NEVER BEEN KNOWN FOR THE LACK OF ABILITY TO ACT.
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 09 STATE 288490

Q. FRED, DO YOU -- EARLIER, YOU USED THE WORD "CRITICAL." DO YOU SEE THE SITUATION THERE AS CRITICAL?

A. NO, I SAID, "IN THIS CRITICAL AREA."

Q. BUT WOULD YOU --

A. AND THIS CERTAINLY HAS BEEN A CRITICAL AREA FOR SOME TIME AND --

Q. YOU WOULDN'T CHARACTERIZE THE SITUATION AS CRITICAL?

A. NO, I AM NOT. I AM SAYING: "IN THIS CRITICAL AREA," WHICH ARE THE WORDS I USED.

Q. FRED, JUST TO CLEAR SOMETHING UP HERE.

A. YES.

Q. YOU SAID YOU HAD SEEN THE REPORT AND WERE CONCERNED ABOUT IT.

A. I HAVE SEEN THE SAME REPORTS THAT YOU HAVE. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT IT. WE HAVE MADE OUR CONCERN KNOWN TO ALL THE GOVERNMENTS INVOLVED -- AND WE ARE URGING ALL TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT IN THIS "CRITICAL AREA" -- WHICH IS WHERE THE TERM "CRITICAL" CAME IN.

Q. SO THAT MEANS YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE TROOP MOVEMENT?

THAT IS WHAT I AM TRYING TO GET AT.

A. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE GENERAL SITUATION.

Q. ABOUT THE TROOP MOVEMENT --

A. SORRY, JOE?

Q. WHEN YOU ARE SPEAKING ABOUT ALL THE GOVERNMENTS IN-UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 10 STATE 288490

VOLVED, OR CONCERNED -- I THINK YOU USED THE TWO DIFFERENT WORDS -- WHAT GOVERNMENTS? CAN YOU NAME THE GOVERNMENTS?

A. ALL THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED WITH REGARD TO LEBANON.

Q. YES, WELL, WOULD YOU NAME THEM?

A. IF I LEFT ONE OUT, THEN --

Q. THEY WOULD BE HURT?

Q. WELL, LET'S NAME SOME --

A. I THINK IT IS PERFECTLY OBVIOUS WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE SITUATION IN LEBANON.

Q. WELL THE REASON WHY I ASKED IS BECAUSE THE ARAB LEAGUE IS CONCERNED WITH LEBANON, TOO, AND I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TROOPS MAY MOVE IN -- NOT ONLY SYRIAN TROOPS, BUT SUDANESE, OR SAUDI-ARABIAN -- OR SOMEBODY ELSE. WHAT TROOPS ARE WE CONCERNED ABOUT?

A. I SIMPLY DO NOT HAVE A LIST OF ALL THE GOVERNMENTS WHICH WE CONSIDER TO BE CONCERNED, WHICH I CAN GIVE TO YOU, JOE, AND I --

Q. YOU DON'T HAVE A LIST --

A. AND I DO NOT WANT TO GIVE YOU A LIST THAT MIGHT BE INCOMPLETE.

Q. WHAT COULD YOU TELL US? COULD YOU TELL US THIS:

COULD I ASK YOU, THEN, WHETHER OR NOT THE UNITED STATES HAS ASKED EGYPT TO USE RESTRAINT?

SAUDIA ARABIA, TO USE RESTRAINT? AS WELL AS SYRIA -- LEBANON -- AND ISRAEL?

A. I CANNOT ANSWER THAT. I AM NOT GOING TO SINGLE OUT INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES AS THOSE WHICH HAVE RECEIVED OUR UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 11 STATE 288490

COMMUNICATION OF OUR FEELINGS ON THIS PARTICULAR SUBJECT.

Q. BUT THERE IS NO INDICATION OF ANY NEW COMMUNICATION, IS THERE?

A. WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "NEW COMMUNICATION?"

Q. WELL, WHATEVER YOU ARE SAYING TO THEM -- WHOEVER THEY ARE -- YOU ARE NOT SAYING SOMETHING NEW, ARE YOU?

A. I THINK OUR COUNSELLING OF RESTRAINT IS NOT A NEW THING.

BUT WE ARE CONSTANTLY IN TOUCH WITH THE GOVERNMENTS IN THE AREA, AS YOU KNOW.

Q. JUST LIKE BOB FUNSETH SAID YESTERDAY, YOU WARN NOBODY, BECAUSE IT IS NOT IN OUR NATURE TO LEVEL WARNINGS. HE SAID THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DOESN'T LIKE TO WARN ANYBODY, I THINK HE SAID YESTERDAY.

A. WE ARE NOT IN THE BUSINESS OF "PASSING WARNINGS."

Q. COULD I GO ONE STEP FURTHER ON THIS AND ASK WHETHER OR NOT OUR REQUEST FOR RESTRAINT -- IN OUR REQUEST FOR RESTRAINT, HAVE WE BEEN CONSULTING WITH COUNTRIES OTHER THAN THOSE IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

A. I DO NOT KNOW.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST? IS THE SECRETARY STILL ENGAGED IN THE MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS OR IS THERE ANY HOPE THAT THERE WILL BE MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE HE PASSES FROM THE SCENE?

A. WELL IT DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU MEAN BY "NEGOTIATIONS."

I KNOW THE SECRETARY REMAINS VERY ACTIVELY CONCERNED IN FOLLOWING THE SITUATION. AS TO SPECIFIC NEGOTIATIONS, OR NEW MOVES, OR WHAT HAVE YOU -- I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO INDICATION THAT THERE IS ANYTHING LIKE THAT IN THE OFFING.

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 12 STATE 288490

Q. WHAT ABOUT AFRICA? WHAT ABOUT CHINA? WHAT ABOUT ANY NEW MOVES ANYWHERE IN THE OFFING?

A. YOU KNOW, I THINK THE SECRETARY HAS ADDRESSED THE WHOLE QUESTION OF WHAT ROLE HE FEELS HE SHOULD PLAY DURING THE NEXT, ROUGHLY, SEVEN WEEKS, AND I CANNOT REALLY ADD ANYTHING TO WHAT HE HAS SAID ON THE SUBJECT RECENTLY ON THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION AND ON THE CONDUCT OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY -- INCLUDING NEW INITIATIVES.

ROBINSON

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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